

HHU Master Plan Committee Minutes: May 5, 2016

Great Hall, Town Hall

Present: Hans Larsen, Ellen Gibbs, Jack Morgan, Matt Kelley, Sharon Gray, David Lussier, Tom Ahern, Seong-II Ahn, Nancy Calderwood, Stephan Gaudie, Todd Ofenloch, Lara Pfadt, Sara Shanahan, Jose Soliva, David Stern, Maura Sullivan, Brent Warner, Meghan Jop, Judy Belliveau and Michael Zehner. **Absent:** Ed Cloaninger, Tamara Feldman, Allan Port.

Mr. Larsen opened the meeting at 7:08 pm.

Minutes: Upon a motion by Jack Morgan, and seconded by Sharon Gray, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 28, 2016.

Committee Work Plan

Mr. Larsen reviewed the proposed work plan. He reviewed each of the key elements including enrollment, educational program requirements, current state of the facilities, neighborhood school model, facilities options, and traffic. Mr. Larsen noted Dr. Lussier would discuss enrollment matters in detail later in the evening. The Committee clarified the elements and discussed how to accomplish each task. With regards to the state of the facilities, Mr. Larsen noted the Committee would need to focus on the physical limitations of the buildings, and the resulting impacts on the educational program. The Committee will review Wellesley's history with regard to Neighborhood Schools, review the related research, and discuss the implications to the master plan. With regard to facilities options, the Committee will review the past analysis from SMMA and determine what new options warrant consideration. With regard to traffic analysis, the Committee will first need to select the specific facility options, and the key traffic variables to be studied. Mr. Larsen noted the Town has two on-call traffic consultants, VHB and Beta. Mr. Larsen suggested each of the consultants make a proposal to the Committee, and the Committee could choose between those two proposals. The results of the traffic analysis will help the Committee refine the overall evaluation criteria.

Mr. Larsen noted key decision points along the way, which are intended to lead toward the Committee's evaluation of all appropriate options and development of a final master plan.

Dr. Gaudie suggested the Committee should try to determine a range for enrollment and identify options that best fit within that range. With regards to educational parameters, Dr. Gaudie asked what the Committee is trying to deliver, i.e., baseline vs. optimal. He noted the review of the existing facilities is really to understand how far they are from the baseline or optimal condition. Dr. Gaudie was of the opinion that it would be good to have some form of town-wide survey to clarify residents' expectations with respect to "Neighborhood Schools," the findings of which would inform the Committee's evaluation criteria.

Ms. Shanahan stated she would find it useful to view/tour the schools at an early date, i.e., before the Committee receives SMMA representatives for a review of the various options considered to-date. Ms. Shanahan suggested scheduling dates for consultants to join the Committee, so that Committee members could plan accordingly.

The Committee discussed the timetable for site visits. Dr. Lussier noted the most flexibility for scheduling would be after hours, however, if the Committee wanted to see the school while in session, the Committee will need to

break into small groups. It was suggested that the Committee tour a cross-section of schools, e.g., one that is new or has been fully renovated, and one that has had more limited work.

The Committee discussed how much emphasis should be placed on simply reviewing the results of past work, vs. breaking new ground in terms of looking at new options, etc. Mr. Larsen reaffirmed that the Committee's charge calls for a fresh look at all aspects of this need, including the potential development of additional facilities options.

Enrollment

The Committee discussed the turnaround time for a new enrollment study. Ms. Belliveau explained the process normally takes approximately 2 -3 months. An update by Cropper (prior enrollment consultant) would take less time. Mr. Larsen suggested Ms. Belliveau get several quotes on the cost of a new enrollment study.

Dr. Lussier handed out several enrollment documents and reviewed the results of the most recent enrollment study. He explained that the School Facilities Committee ultimately decided to develop facility options to support a total elementary school enrollment of 2500 students. Dr. Lussier showed a comparison of the Town's rolling 3 year projections with Cropper's long term projection, which takes account of additional variables.

Dr. Lussier explained the peak number of elementary students has been just under 2500 and total elementary school enrollment is currently at 2307 students.

Dr. Lussier reviewed the terminology associated with schools including elementary sections and class sizes. The Town has 113 sections. Class size guidelines are 18-22 students for Grades K-1, and 22-24 students for Grades 2-5. Dr. Lussier discussed the factors considered in establishing classroom assignments including programs and siblings.

The Committee discussed hiring another firm to do an enrollment study to contrast with the findings from the Cropper Study. Ms. Belliveau will develop a statement of work and solicit quotes for the Committee's consideration. The Committee will review the resulting proposals and decide how to proceed.

The Committee discussed capacity and redistricting. Dr. Lussier noted the capacity of a school is the total number of students a particular school can support. He noted there is also temporary capacity, which includes portable classrooms that the School Department would like to phase out. If a school is below capacity, other programming may occupy classroom space such that there is no available space.

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting in two weeks to allow for the solicitation of quotes for the new enrollment study. School visits will likely be scheduled between May 30th and June 6th.

Citizen Speak

Ryan Dietz, 1 Shadow Lane, asked how future development, 40B projects, and tear downs are brought into the model in addition to financial downturns. Mr. Dietz noted he wants the investment the Town makes into the schools to be the best we can make.

Bruce Rogoff, Upham District resident, said if we keep 7 schools we will have the most flexibility and most kids would be able to walk to school. The initial estimates suggested it was 15% more to renovate the schools versus building a larger Upham. Mr. Rogoff suggested going to Waban to see the Angier School which is built for 410 students and is smaller than the proposed school at the Upham site. He noted the community has demonstrated an interest in neighborhood schools and would like to find a solution to continue them.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.